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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: November 21, 1958

SUBJECT: Berlin

PARTICIPANTS: Sir Harold Caccia, British Ambassador
Lord Hood, Minister, British Embassy
Mr. Livingston T. Merchant, EUR
Mr. B. E. L. Timmons, RA
Mr. Robert H. McBride, WE

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Ambassador Caccia raised the question of where the principal focus of coordination would be for tripartite discussions on the Berlin question. He thought that Bonn should be the principal point both for tripartite discussions and later for discussions with the Germans. Mr. Merchant said that he had the feeling that this problem must be handled at a very high level on a continuous basis. He said we of course always were happy for obvious reasons to have talks in Washington but we had no specific proposal to make. He recognized that appropriate machinery did exist in Bonn for discussions on the Berlin crisis.

Ambassador Caccia pointed out that there did exist a specific responsibility in Bonn among the three High Commissioners for the handling of Berlin problems. Furthermore if there were a crisis on Berlin it might be necessary to act very quickly and the High Commissioners in Bonn would be in a better position to do this. Mr. Merchant stressed the importance of moving the Germans along with us. First we should insure that there was no rift among the three since if there were a difference of view we perhaps would not want to reveal this to the Germans. However, if there were tripartite agreement we should make sure that such agreements were communicated with the Germans promptly in order that there might be the closest possible harmony of policy among the four.

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